

Applicants submit that the following claim listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device having at least one cutting element traveling in a circular plane, the cutting element having a length, a center of rotation, and a distal end, the guard comprising a guard portion and a perimeter edge, the perimeter edge forming a continuous circular edge above the circular plane of travel of the cutting element at a radius less than the length of the cutting element, said perimeter edge is spaced apart from said circular plane between about 1/8" and 3/8" and said guard portion extending from said perimeter edge to adjacent said center of rotation.
2. (Original) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim 1, wherein said radius is between about 80% and 95% of the length of the cutting element.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim [[1]] 2, wherein said guard portion forms an arcuate circle of revolution.
5. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim [[1]] 4, further comprising a mounting feature, said mounting feature mounting said guard portion to a flexible element cutting device.
6. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim [[1]] 5, further comprising at least one cutter attached to said guard portion, said cutter being

located at a radius greater than the radius of the perimeter edge and extending into the circular plane of travel of the at least one cutting element.

7. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device having a center assembly and a rotating cutting element, said guard comprising:

a perimeter wall, said perimeter wall ~~forming a cylindrical wall~~ being spaced about 1/8" to 3/8" above a cutting plane formed by the said rotating cutting element, said rotating cutting element having a length extending from a center of rotation to a distal end, said perimeter wall forming a cylindrical wall at a radius about the center of rotation of the cutting element, said radius being less than the length of said rotating cutting element;

a cover, said cover extending from said perimeter wall to a location adjacent to said center shaft;

a cover mount, said cover mount connecting said cover to said center assembly;

and at least one flexible element cutter, said flexible element cutter offset from said perimeter wall and extending into said cutting plane formed by the rotating cutting element.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim [[8]] 7, wherein said radius is between about 80% and 95% of the length of the cutting element.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A guard for a flexible element cutting device having a center assembly and

a rotating element, said guard comprising a first guard half and a second guard half, said first guard half being engageable with said second guard half to form a perimeter wall and a cover, said perimeter wall being spaced about 1/8" to 3/8" above a cutting plane formed by the rotating ~~cutting~~ element; said cover extending from said perimeter wall to a location adjacent said center assembly, wherein said rotating element has a length extending from a center of rotation to a distal end of said rotating element, and said perimeter wall forms a cylindrical wall at a radius about the center of rotation of the rotating element, said radius being less than the length of the cutting element.

12. (Original) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim 11, wherein said first guard half and said second guard half when engaged further form a cover mount, said cover mount connecting said cover to said center assembly.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim ~~[[13]]~~ 12, wherein said radius is between about 80% and 95% of the length of the cutting element.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A guard for a flexible element cutting device having a center assembly and a ~~rotating~~ flexible cutting element, said guard comprising a plurality of guard portions, said plurality of guard portions being engageable with each other to form a perimeter wall and a cover, said perimeter wall ~~forming a cylindrical wall~~ being spaced about 1/8" to 3/8" above a cutting plane formed by the ~~rotating~~ flexible cutting element; said cover extending from

said perimeter wall to a location adjacent said center assembly, wherein said flexible cutting element has a length extending from a center of rotation to a distal end of said flexible cutting element, and said perimeter wall forms a cylindrical wall at a radius about the center of rotation of said flexible cutting element, said radius being less than the length of the flexible cutting element.

17. (Original) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of guard portions when engaged further form a cover mount, said cover mount connecting said cover to said center assembly.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) A guard for a flexible element cutting device according to claim ~~[[18]]~~ 17, wherein said radius is between about 80% and 95% of the length of the cutting element.

20. (Canceled)